

DRIVING
TECHNOLOGY POLICY
FOR THE
COMPUTING COMMUNITY



*ACM US Public
Policy Council*

CORE PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin USACM's work, guide its actions and help ensure a balance among diverse views in public policy affecting science and technology. Actions, deliberations or conclusions that are contrary to these principles are rarely, if ever, in the interests of USACM and are to be avoided.

USACM SEEKS TO:

- Incorporate and adhere to all of the elements of the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- Educate the public, policymakers and the community about public policy issues that affect the development of technology or where technology influences policy issues to better inform policy decisions.
- Be a non-partisan broker of scientific and technical expertise, free from the influence of product vendors or others with vested interests (e.g. issue advocacy groups, political parties, etc.) making recommendations (not mandates) – underpinned by scientific evidence – for improving the field of computing or the responsible use of technology in society.
- Issue recommendations informed by technical expertise rather than economic, social or other values (such as national security) in cases where policy tradeoffs may be necessary.
- Issue recommendations articulating desired outcomes or performance standards rather than mandating specific technologies or vendor approaches.
- Issue recommendations that embrace the fundamental qualities of good design that incorporate privacy, security, reliability, accessibility and usability criteria.
- Focus expertise, authority and resources on the technical and professional aspects of public policy debates, and inform policymakers when applying technology solutions may be inappropriate or where gaps exist in between ideals that may not be perfectly realized from a technological perspective.
- Take into account the complete context of policy development, including individuals, organizations, purposes, systems and networks to minimize unintended consequences.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

USACM focuses its work on the following policy issues: accessibility, digital government, e-voting, innovation, intellectual property, privacy and security. USACM members participate in at least one of six committees: Accessibility, Digital Government, Intellectual Property, Law, Privacy and Security, and Voting. Our membership is comprised of experts from these fields and can serve as valuable resources for the media, government and public.

To arrange to speak with one of USACM's many experts, please contact the ACM Office of Public Policy at 212.626.0541 or acmpo@hq.acm.org.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility must go beyond compliance with relevant state and federal legislation to include all aspects of the interface between computer and user(s). As such, USACM is dedicated to making computing more accessible for everyone. Such advances will pay dividends in evolving technology and will result in better access to important information as well as broader citizen participation in commercial and educational activities.

DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Government agencies and legislators have long recognized the value of the Internet and share a strong commitment to providing for the information needs of citizens and others. USACM is interested in policies and technologies that can facilitate both the online operations of government and increased citizen participation in their government. It encourages maximizing the availability and accessibility of government information.

INNOVATION

Developments in computing have created new jobs, products and services, and increased the speed, scope and scale of innovation, both within the computing industry and across society. USACM advocates federal policies that support research, research funding and education. Such policies are critical to ensuring that the innovation ecosystem is strong and that computing advancements continue to revolutionize industry and society.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Adequate protection of intellectual property requires carefully balancing varied interests. USACM is interested in securing the rights of those producing new computing technology and services and works to ensure that fair uses of intellectual property are preserved. Without fair use rights, researchers, students and others cannot effectively exchange knowledge and information.

LAW

Federal law regarding information technology holds the potential to both foster and impede the computing industry. USACM is dedicated to monitoring the legal landscape that affects computing policy issues and ensuring that such laws provide an environment conducive to innovation.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

As the nation embraces new technologies and increases interaction with the data and systems these technologies entail, the issues of security and privacy in computing become even more paramount. USACM focuses on building awareness and knowledge of the threats around us—whether at the government, corporate or individual level—and using that awareness and knowledge to develop strategies that protect, monitor and control information and its access.

VOTING

Virtually all voting systems in use today are subject to fraud and error, including electronic voting systems. Focusing on the technologies associated with voting (as well as voting over the Internet), USACM works to encourage policies that support the reliability, security and verifiability of public elections.



USACM member and University of Pittsburgh Professor Harry Hochheiser talks with Barbara Simons, ACM President (1998-2000) and founder and former chair of USACM.

The U.S. Public Policy Council of ACM (USACM) is the focal point for the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) interaction with U.S. government organizations, the computing community and the U.S. public in all matters of U.S. public policy related to information technology. ACM entrusts it to:

- Speak for the computing community ACM represents;
- Promote the responsible use of technology in society; and
- Shape technology-related policy by communicating with government policymakers, the public and the broader computing community.

USACM's contributions to public policy are drawn from the deep technical expertise of the computing community. As a scientific society, ACM and, by extension, USACM are obligated to apply this knowledge to bring relevant scientific research, best practices and foresight of technology advances to public policy issues.

USACM represents a diverse community of practitioners, researchers, managers and other interested parties from academia, government, industry, nonprofit organizations, the self-employed and the retired. Its members span a broad range of ages, social, political and ethnic backgrounds. As such, members must continually seek consensus positions firmly grounded in scientific or technology knowledge rather than representing specific values that individual members may hold.



Any ACM member in good standing is eligible for membership in USACM. Visit the website to learn how to become a member.

usacm.acm.org

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